
THE
Lord Bishop of *BRISTOL*'s
S E R M O N

Before the RIGHT HONOURABLE
House of LORDS,

On *Tuesday, January 30, 1759.*

Die Mercurii, 31st Jan. 1759.

Ordered,

BY the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Bristol*, for the Sermon by him preached before this House Yesterday, in the Abbey-Church, *Westminster*; and he is hereby desired to cause the same to be forthwith printed and published.

Ashley Cowper, Cler. Parliamentor.

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S E R M O N

Preached before the Right Honourable the

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Lords SPIRITUAL and TEMPORAL in
Parliament assembled,

I N T H E

Abbey-Church, *Westminster*,

On *Tuesday*, *January 30*, 1759.

B E I N G T H E

Day appointed to be observed as the Day of the
Martyrdom of King CHARLES I.

K Yonge B Y
PHILIP, Lord Bishop of BRISTOL.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WHISTON and B. WHITE, at
Boyle's-Head, in *Fleet-Street*. 1759.

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S E R M O N

Preached before the Right Honourable the
Lords Spiritual and Temporal in
Parliament assembled,

IN THE
Abbey-Church, Westminster,

On Friday, January 30, 1759.

BEING THE
Day appointed to be observed as the Day of the
Anniversary of King Charles I.

By

PHILIP, Lord Bishop of Bristol.

Printed by

L O N D O N :
Printed for J. Warton and E. Warton, at
Boyle's Head in New-Street, 1759.

PROVERBS iv. 23.

*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of
it are the issues of life.*

THE instructions contained in the Proverbs of Solomon, generally understood to have been written when his judgment was in its greatest perfection, and those in his book of Wisdom compiled in the decline of his life, are the result not only of the experience of others, but of himself. He was a prince of early wisdom and piety, formed to the latter by the excellent lessons of his dying father, and in full possession of the former by means of his own industry. For he had applied his heart to learn every thing; he was by no means a stranger to the laudable studies of elegant arts; and he had pursued with success, what was more important and substantial, natural and moral science. He acknowledged and proclaimed the vanity of worldly pleasures, unlawful pleasures particularly, and seriously lamented

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his own pursuit of them. But independently of them, possibly before he had enslaved himself to them, he understood and taught the necessity of acting upon a principle of religion, which alone can be a constant and uniform ground of action, not upon fits and starts of passion or affection, which perpetually mislead men from the real duties of life.

He was then admirably well formed for a teacher to all sorts of men in all conditions, from that of the sovereign, to that of the peasant. And accordingly his books contain many excellent lessons, extending themselves to every branch of our conduct, and applicable, either generally to the whole of our duty, or occasionally to any part of it, which may at particular seasons be the more immediate object of our consideration.

Amongst these none is more strongly expressed than that of my text, *keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.*

As the heart in the body may be conceived to be the great principle of life independently of the several less noble parts; so the mind, free from the turbulence of passions, and not enslaved by the violence of unreasonable affections, is the fountain of all religious and moral and civil good. It is therefore to be most diligently kept; it is to be guarded against all assaults;

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to be preserved against all corruptions; carefully watched as it receives impressions from without, and most punctually attended to when it begins its own motions within.

“Pursue every thing useful to you,” may be the moral philosophy of some; “have in view all kinds of profit and pleasure, indulge every appetite and gratify every passion,” may be pleasing instructions; and every thing of this sort may seem preferable to “*keep thy heart with all diligence.*” Yet all history would teach us (if our reasonings upon such points stood in need of that sort of experiment) that the unbounded gratification of every desire, for power, for pleasures, for riches, for honours, tends to the certain destruction of nations, whose prosperity will best be preserved by following the lesson of the wise king, *keep thy heart with all diligence*: keep one uniform, steady tenor of life: resolve never to depart from the three great duties, to God, to man, and to yourself: and sacrifice every gratification rather than deviate from what you cannot but admit as a principle of reason and religion. The consequence will be, not that you will never err, not that you will never differ from other men, not that your actions will never be eventually mischievous; but certainly that you will never commit wilful sin against God, and probably

that amongst much good you will occasion but little evil to man.

Keeping the heart with all diligence is the duty and the interest of all men, considered either as individuals, or as members of a civil society. For it must be their duty to do the will of God, which yet is not to be done without watchfulness and care in this imperfect state, surrounded as they are with a great variety of temptations from without, liable to be deceived by their own inadequate notions of real good, and generally but too ignorant of their own strength. And it must be their interest likewise, because it will lead them to that kind of knowledge which is of all others most beneficial. It will lead them to estimate rightly their faculties and powers; to see the secret workings and first springs of evil in their breasts, and so to defeat them; it will lead them to judge worse of themselves than they usually do, and by that means to become better; and at the same time to think more candidly of the rest of the world, when they shall observe that the roots of such weeds as they are apt to dislike in others are sometimes to be found growing up within themselves.

The same preservation of the heart which makes them good men will also make them good citizens. For under that Character their conduct must extend
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its influence much beyond Self, and the ends of society must be answered or defeated in proportion as men know themselves, and by the help of that knowledge contain themselves every one within his own sphere. The human mind was endowed with Reason as the great and ruling principle, but yet made susceptible of Passions, which, in conjunction with and subordination to the other, were undoubtedly designed to influence its judgment and direct its choice. Nor is it likely, or indeed possible, that a wise and gracious Creator should have furnished men with affections altogether useless, any more than that he would have given them had they been necessarily pernicious. But they are far from being the one or the other. They are so far from being necessarily pernicious, that without them we might frequently omit many good and beneficent actions towards others; and this too implies their utility, besides that they are often the sources not only of innocent and lawful, but also of virtuous pleasures. Weeping with those that weep, rejoicing with those that rejoice, being deeply sensible of the miseries to which our kindred, our friends, our country may be reduced, are all offices arising immediately from affections. They arise indeed from the most benevolent and humane affections, and therefore we do not wonder that our Saviour himself, when he

partook of our nature, was actuated by them, breaking forth into a most pathetic exclamation at the approaching ruin of his country.—*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? Behold your house is left unto you desolate.*—And again, *when he came near, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.* Nor are the other kind of affections, however less amiable and more dangerous in general, without their uses when rightly ordered. For dominion must be given to the rational part of our composition, what importance soever we may allow to the other. Reason must govern and restrain the passions, which yet in many instances may give life and spirit to action, as the solid earth contains within its banks that element, to which (however turbulent it may sometimes be) it owes its sweetness, its beauty, and its fertility. So that men cannot be concerned to eradicate, but only to restrain their affections, and to curb their natural desires.

But such is the perverse use of human liberty, so violently are we hurried away to the gratification of
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every wish that we foolishly imagine may conduce to our profit or to our pleasure, that in a state of equality men must soon run into most extravagant excesses, and many be led to think that they had not sufficiently provided for their own being, or at least their own happiness, until they had deprived their fellows of the free and entire enjoyment of their acquisitions. Nor could such disorders be remedied so long as equality of rank and honour and power were preserved, or, to speak more properly, so long as there were no established rank and honour and power amongst men. For although in that case an injury done to one ought to be resented by all, yet that it would in general be overlooked is certain and well known. And then as to every person's resenting injuries done to himself, and punishing the authors of them with his own hand, he would certainly not have power sufficient and probably partiality in abundance. The indolence therefore of numbers of men equal to and independent of each other, the weakness and partiality of particulars, and the otherwise certain prevalence of fraud and rapin over innocence, make civil magistracy absolutely necessary to the happiness and peace of mankind.

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But yet although in civil societies much evil must be prevented, the natural violence of the passions will still remain, restrained indeed by fear in some cases, but possibly encouraged in others by new hopes and new views, to which in a state of nature men must be strangers. For honours and powers planted within and fenced by mutual agreements, are much more tempting, because much more secure, than when they can only be acquired and maintained by force.

Princes will be allured to pervert the authority, which is delegated to them for the protection of their subjects, to the promoting of their own interests and the satisfying their personal ambition; applauding their wisdom, if the strict letter of law will give some kind of sanction to their attempts; and forgetting that even law itself will in many cases not justify its own severity.

The lust of power and wealth will induce many to fall in with the dispositions of such masters for their own advantage.

And whilst the virtue of some stands forth to prevent the mischiefs of tyranny, it will, although far from designing it, give protection to the vicious inclinations of others, who will seek to gratify their intemperate desires by confusion and ruin.

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affliction and sorrow, neighbours, friends, kindred at enmity with each other even unto death ; every account of those times being like the roll of Ezekiel, *wherein was written lamentations and mourning and woe.*

Exertions of regal authority, which its best and warmest apologists can only palliate, not justify, alarmed a free people, who were yet but beginning to be sensible of their rights and of their strength. New securities against the Crown, demanded and granted, threw a weight of power on the other side with which it was impossible to contend. The mutual confidence, which should subsist between the different parts of the Legislature, was soon destroyed ; the banks were broken down, and the waters of confusion overflowed the land. Seven years of civil war prepared the way for twelve years of usurpation, by putting the King to a barbarous and ignominious death, depriving the Lords of their hereditary honours, and dismissing the wretched remains of the Commons with a degree of insolence which even those cruel and bloody men had not deserved at such hands.

But these solemn commemorations of past events, continued by the piety and wisdom of the state, are not designed for the keeping up the spirit of division, and the support of prejudices, but for the uniting the hearts of all men to prevent the return of the like calamities ;

lamities; and for the humbling ourselves before God, by whose peculiar appointment frequently, and by whose wise permission always, good or evil happen to any nation. Let us then with this view consider ourselves, first, as subjects to the king, and secondly, as the servants of God.

First, as subjects, it is our happiness to live under a form of Government in its nature the most eligible, and likewise under the mildest administration of it, with which any nation in any age hath been blessed. The best faculties of the mind may be perverted to the worst uses; and wisdom, power, and courage may enslave as well as preserve mankind. But when the protection of mens rights as well as the maintaining of order is manifestly the object of a sovereign's care, and justice softened by humanity and benevolence is the main pillar and chosen support of his government, his authority must be regarded, his person must be beloved, and his people must rejoice. Yet not all the people. Witness a daring and dangerous rebellion; witness the present eager encouragement of factious libels, levelled directly against the person of the King himself, and against the principles of that great event to which we owe our present establishment, and from which true liberty, civil and religious, takes its real date. But all they will and must
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rejoice,

rejoice, who neither seek for the unknown charms of arbitrary power on the one hand ; nor on the other applaud the regicides of this day, wishing to see in *Great Britain* a republican establishment, liable to a great variety of objections besides those of duty and conscience.

Love and Fear are passions by which men are alternately swayed ; and it is our happiness that the motive of fear need not be urged to enforce obedience to him who chooses to be loved. All civil magistrates are not only masters, but should be fathers of their people. Accordingly, when the Prince to whom we owe obedience, might expostulate with us in the whole of the 6th verse of the 1st of Malachi—*A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master : if then I be a master, where is my fear ?*—yet after the divine pattern prefers the other part only—*If I be a father, where is mine honour ?*—who can refuse paying it unto him ?

God almighty, the universal Lord of all, is himself best thanked for his own general government and protection of his creatures by our obedience to his will, and walking in the ways of his commandments. And although the distance between omnipotence and any earthly power, between the supreme wisdom of God and the very best thoughts of princes, be infinite, yet we are sure that their governments conspire to
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the same ends. Religious and civil duties must have the same tendency : fear God and honour the king are therefore to be found united in the same precept.

St. *Paul's* allusion, made upon another occasion, may be applied to the case of men under the same government. In the body the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee : nor can the eye and the hand, and all other parts of it together, say to any, even the most minute of them, I have no need of thee. So closely are our interests connected ; so dependent is every one of us upon every other ; and consequently so dangerous is it to the public safety, tranquillity at least, that even the meanest of us should transgress the bounds of civil duty.

Indeed, as civil œconomy was designed to secure the happiness of every individual, that man must be no friend to himself who refuses to enjoy the benefit of it when held out to him with so liberal an hand, neglecting to search his own heart, and to see whether pride and envy have not struck deep root and spread themselves far and wide within it. If they have, it is impossible for him to be happy under the most righteous and perfect dispensations, much less under such as must have in them a mixture of human infirmity, and thereby give bad minds a fatal opportunity of becoming worse. But if he finds himself free from those turbulent passions, or
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capable of stopping their progress, a very little reflection will satisfy him that his interest conspires with his duty, and that his happiness depends upon his obedience to those laws which were made to secure it, and upon his gratitude to such as watch continually to promote it.

There is nothing more distasteful than the declamations of bad men in praise of freedom, nor any thing more dangerous to the interests of a community than *liberty used as a cloak of maliciousness*. For in the openness of mens hearts they cherish even the appearance of what they love, and will take part upon that account too frequently with such as have nothing but appearance and clamour to recommend them. Let us therefore cultivate in our breasts the highest ideas of liberty and virtue as being inseparable companions, and remember, that as there can be no exalted pitch of virtue in a slave, so neither can there be any true relish of liberty in a profligate.

Secondly, the humbling ourselves before God is a duty, for the performance whereof these solemn commemorations call upon his servants.

If we have a sense of his presence and providence, this must be always our duty, although its necessity will more particularly occur to our minds when we are considering great and amazing calamities, and forming resolutions of so habitually preserving and watching our hearts as to prevent our having any share in producing
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the like in our own times. He is the sovereign dispenser of good and evil; a firm reliance upon his favour and protection, and ardent prayers for his guidance are most necessary, since constant experience teaches us, that the wisest of the sons of men cannot foresee the issue of their own councils and actions. We live in a state of great uncertainty; we are not sure that God will crown our prayers with success; we are not sure that he will prosper our endeavours; for we may pray perhaps for, and aim at things neither good for ourselves nor others; and we may pray against and strive against the greatest of blessings. Nevertheless we are sure that the ways of God will be found equal in the end, and we are in the mean while sure of pleasing him by conforming to and obeying his will. A perfection of obedience to God universally prevailing, implies in its notion such goodness in all men as would produce perfection of social happiness, refraining the spirit of ambition, checking the outrage of faction, sheathing the swords of tyranny and rebellion, and cherishing and promoting the growth of all the virtues and charities which relate to civil life: so certain it is, even beyond all controversy, that religion and temporal happiness, however it is that they are so often separated, are naturally companions.

The view of such perfection of obedience is, I fear, so distant, that few give themselves the trouble even of endeavouring to be delighted with it, and all despair of
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bringing it so near as to force the inattentive to admire it. Yet such despair doth not become us. We have the word of God to teach us, the promises of God to encourage us, and the Spirit of God to assist us.

Such, in truth, as resolve to be *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*, and to persevere in all those delights, vicious as well as innocent, which rank and power and riches can procure, and that too in some cases with more industry and pain than the offices of religion would require on their part, can have no reason to expect the blessings which they despise.

But they who *flee those things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, meekness, patience*, will be happy in themselves most probably even on this side of the grave, and when they shall have *finished their course*, will leave to their posterity such examples as will animate them to promote the glory of God and the good of mankind.

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

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